

**DEVELOPMENT OF NOVEL BIOSORBENTS
IN REMOVING HEAVY METALS FROM
AQUEOUS SOLUTION**

A

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in Fulfilment of the Requirement
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**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN
ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING**

By

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Certificate

I certify that this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not being submitted as part of candidature for any other degree.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me and any help that I have received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in this thesis.

Signature of Candidate



.....
(Md Anwar Hossain)

I dedicated this work to my beloved parents

Md Akbar Ali
Mosa. Ruhila Khatun

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Table of Contents

Title Page	i
Certificate	ii
Dedication	iii
Acknowledgement	iv
Table of Contents	v
List of Tables	xv
List of Figures	xix
Acronyms and symbols	xxvi
List of Publications	xxviii
Abstract	xxix
 Chapter 1	 1-1
Introduction	1-1
1.0 Background	1-2
1.1 Heavy metals pollution in water and health risk	1-2
1.2 Removal of heavy metals from water	1-3
1.3 Biosorption of heavy metals	1-4
1.4 Aims and objectives	1-5
1.5 Research hypotheses and outline of thesis	1-6
 Chapter 2	 2-1
Review of Literature	2-1
2.1 Background	2-2
2.2 Heavy metals: sources, toxicity and environmental fates	2-3
2.2.1 Sources of heavy metals	2-3
2.2.2 Heavy metals in industrial wastewater	2-4
2.2.3 Heavy metals in domestic wastewater	2-5
2.2.4 Forms and fate of heavy metals in the aquatic environment	2-6
2.2.4.1 Cadmium	2-6
2.2.4.2 Copper	2-6
2.2.4.3 Lead	2-6
2.2.4.4 Zinc	2-7
2.2.5 Toxicity	2-7
2.2.5.1 Effect of lead	2-8
2.2.5.2 Effect of cadmium	2-10
2.2.5.3 Effect of copper	2-12

2.2.5.4	Effect of zinc	2–14
2.2.6	Heavy metal pollution scenario	2–15
2.2.6.1	Heavy metal pollution in Australia	2–17
2.3	Technologies for removal of heavy metals from wastewater	2–20
2.3.1	Physical methods and processes	2–22
2.3.1.1	Evaporators	2–22
2.3.1.2	Precipitation	2–23
2.3.1.3	Cementation	2–24
2.3.1.4	Ion-exchange	2–24
2.3.1.5	Membrane process	2–25
2.3.1.6	Reverse osmosis	2–26
2.3.1.7	Electrodialysis	2–26
2.3.1.8	Ultrafiltration	2–27
2.3.1.9	Flocculation and coagulation	2–27
2.3.1.10	Flotation	2–28
2.3.2	Chemical methods and processes	2–28
2.3.2.1	Chemical precipitation	2–28
2.3.2.2	Hydroxide precipitation	2–29
2.3.2.3	Carbonate precipitation	2–29
2.3.2.4	Sulphide precipitation	2–29
2.3.2.5	Chemical reduction	2–30
2.3.2.6	Xanthate process	2–30
2.3.2.7	Solvent extraction	2–31
2.3.2.8	Electrodeposition	2–31
2.3.3	Biological methods	2–32
2.3.3.1	Phytoremediation	2–32
2.3.3.2	Microremediation	2–33
2.3.3.3	Heavy metals biosorption by microorganisms	2–33
2.4	Biosorption and biosorbents	2–37
2.4.1	Introduction	2–37
2.4.2	Bioadsorbents	2–38
2.4.3	Importance of biosorbents in water treatment	2–40
2.4.4	Advantages and disadvantages of biosorption	2–40
2.4.4.1	Advantages	2–41
2.4.4.2	Disadvantages	2–42
2.4.5	Characteristics of bioadsorbents	2–42
2.4.5.1	Specific surface area	2–42
2.4.5.2	Pore volume	2–43
2.4.5.3	Ash content	2–43

2.4.5.4	Particle sizes	2–43
2.4.5.5	pH	2–44
2.4.5.6	Charge/polarity	2–44
2.4.5.7	Surface functional groups	2–45
2.4.6	Mechanism of metal biosorption	2–45
2.4.6.1	Physisorption	2–45
2.4.6.2	Chemisorption	2–45
2.4.6.3	Biosorption	2–47
2.4.6.4	Biosorption mechanism	2–48
2.4.7	Factors affecting biosorption	2–53
2.4.7.1	Nature of adsorbate	2–53
2.4.7.2	Nature of biosorbent	2–53
2.4.7.3	Specific area of the adsorbent	2–54
2.4.7.4	pH of water	2–54
2.4.7.5	Pressure	2–54
2.4.7.6	Temperature	2–55
2.4.7.7	Activation of the adsorbent	2–55
2.4.7.8	Enthalpy of adsorption	2–55
2.4.7.9	Co-ions	2–56
2.4.7.10	Initial metal concentration	2–57
2.4.7.11	Biomass concentration	2–57
2.4.7.12	Contact time	2–58
2.4.8	Application of agro-wastes in removal of heavy metals from wastewater	2–58
2.4.8.1	Process design	2–59
2.4.8.2	Regeneration of the biomass	2–59
2.4.8.3	Suitability of the biosorption technology for an industrial use	2–60
2.4.8.4	Recent uses for biomaterials for removal of heavy metals	2–60
2.5	Modelling of biosorption	2–62
2.5.1	Adsorption theories/isotherms	2–63
2.5.1.1	Langmuir model	2–63
2.5.1.2	Freundlich model	2–64
2.5.1.3	Redlich-Peterson model	2–65
2.5.1.4	Koble-Corrigan model	2–65
2.5.1.5	Sips isotherm model	2–66
2.5.1.6	Temkins' isotherm	2–66
2.5.1.7	Dubinin-Radushkevich isotherm model	2–67

2.5.1.8	Flory-Huggins isotherm model	2-68
2.5.1.9	Hill isotherm model	2-68
2.5.1.10	Unilan equation	2-69
2.5.1.11	Khan isotherm model	2-69
2.5.1.12	Radke-Prausnitz isotherm model	2-69
2.5.1.13	Toth isotherm model	2-69
2.5.2	Sorption kinetics	2-70
2.5.2.1	Pseudo-first-order model	2-71
2.5.2.2	Pseudo-second-order model	2-71
2.5.2.3	Intraparticle diffusion model	2-73
2.5.2.4	Avrami kinetic model	2-73
2.5.2.5	Elovich kinetics model	2-74
2.5.2.6	Fractional power model	2-74
2.6	Column adsorption	2-75
2.6.1	The Break-through Curve	2-75
2.6.2	Models of column studies	2-76
2.6.2.1	Thomas model	2-77
2.6.2.2.	Yoon and Nelson model	2-78
2.6.2.3.	The Adams-Bohart model	2-79
2.6.2.4.	The Wolborska model	2-79
2.6.2.5.	The Clark model	2-80
Chapter 3		3-1
Experimental Investigation		3-1
3.0	Introduction	3-2
3.1	Biosorbents collection and preparation	3-2
3.1.1	Garden grass (GG)	3-2
3.1.2	Maple leaves (ML)	3-2
3.1.3	Banana peels (BP)	3-2
3.1.4	Cabbage wastes (CW)	3-3
3.1.5	Palm oil fruit shells (POFS)	3-3
3.2	Stock solution of metals	3-3
3.2.1	Copper (II) solution	3-3
3.2.2	Lead (II) solution	3-3
3.2.3	Cadmium (II) solution	3-4
3.2.4	Zinc (II) solution	3-4
3.2.5	Wastewater and synthetic wastewater	3-4
3.3	Experimental procedures	3-4

3.3.1	Characterisation of biosorbents	3-4
3.3.1.1	SEM	3-5
3.3.1.2	XRD	3-6
3.3.1.3	FTIR	3-7
3.3.1.4	BET analysis	3-7
3.3.2	Experimental conditions	3-10
3.3.2.1	Effect of pH	3-10
3.3.2.2	Effect of biosorbents doses	3-11
3.3.2.3	Effect of stirring rate	3-12
3.3.2.4	Effect of contact time	3-12
3.3.2.5	Effect of initial metal concentrations	3-12
3.3.2.6	Effect of particles sizes	3-12
3.3.2.7	Effect of temperatures	3-13
3.3.3	Desorption experiments	3-13
3.3.4	Adsorption and desorption equilibriums	3-13
3.3.5	Adsorption and desorption kinetics	3-14
3.3.6	Binary, ternary and quaternary adsorption	3-16
3.3.7	Lab-scale column experiments toward the application	3-16
3.3.8	Flame atomic absorption spectroscopy	3-17
3.4	Data analysis	3-19
Chapter 4		4-1
Biosorption of Cu(II), Pb(II), Cd(II) and Zn(II) from aqueous solution onto garden grass		4-1
4.1	Introduction	4-2
4.2	Results and discussion	4-3
4.2.1	Characterisation of garden grass	4-3
4.2.1.1	Surface structure	4-3
4.2.1.2	X-ray mapping	4-4
4.2.1.3	Functional groups	4-5
4.2.1.4	Specific surface area	4-6
4.2.2	Affecting factors on biosorptions	4-7
4.2.2.1	Effect of pH	4-7
4.2.2.2	Effect of initial concentration and contact time	4-8
4.2.2.3	Effect of doses	4-9
4.2.2.4	Effect of particle size	4-10
4.2.2.5	Effect of temperature	4-12
4.2.2.6	Effect of shaking speed	4-13

4.2.3	Regeneration of garden grass	4-14
4.2.4	Adsorption and desorption isotherm	4-16
4.2.4.1	Copper (II) adsorption and desorption equilibriums	4-16
4.2.4.2	Lead (II) adsorption and desorption equilibriums	4-18
4.2.4.3	Cadmium(II) adsorption and desorption equilibriums	4-20
4.2.4.4	Zinc(II) adsorption and desorption equilibriums	4-22
4.2.4.5	Comparison of Cu(II), Pb(II), Cd(II) and Zn(II) adsorption and desorption	4-24
4.2.5	Adsorption and desorption kinetics	4-29
4.2.5.1	Pseudo-first-order equation	4-30
4.2.5.2	Pseudo-second-order equation	4-31
4.2.5.3	Fractional power equation	4-33
4.2.5.4	Avrami kinetic equation	4-35
4.2.5.5	Intra-particle diffusion model	4-36
4.2.6	Multimetals adsorption	4-39
4.2.6.1	Antagonism of multi-metals system	4-41
4.3	Conclusion	4-43
Chapter 5		5-1
Removal of Cu(II), Pb(II), Cd(II) and Zn(II) from aqueous solution using cabbage bio-wastes		5-1
5.1	Background	5-2
5.2	Results and discussion	5-3
5.2.1	Characterisation of biosorbent	5-3
5.2.1.1	Surface morphology	5-3
5.2.1.2	Functional groups	5-4
5.2.1.3	Specific surface area	5-4
5.2.2	Affecting factors on the performance of biosorption	5-5
5.2.2.1	pH	5-5
5.2.2.2	Contact time	5-6
5.2.2.3	Doses	5-7
5.2.2.4	Initial metals concentration	5-8
5.2.3	Regeneration of biosorbent	5-9
5.2.4	Kinetics of adsorption and desorption	5-11
5.2.4.1	Pseudo-first-order kinetics	5-11
5.2.4.2	Pseudo-second-order kinetics	5-15
5.2.4.3	Elovich equation	5-17
5.2.4.4	Avrami kinetic equation	5-19
5.2.5	Adsorption and desorption equilibrium	5-21

5.2.5.1	The Langmuir isotherm	5-22
5.2.5.3	Sips isotherm	5-28
5.2.5.4	Redlich-Peterson isotherm	5-29
5.2.5.5	Koble-Corrigan isotherm	5-30
5.2.5.6	Khan isotherm	5-32
5.2.5.7	Comparison of models fitness	5-33
5.2.6	Multimetals adsorption	5-34
5.2.6.1	Adsorption behaviour in binary solutions	5-34
5.2.6.2	Adsorption behaviour in ternary solutions	5-36
5.2.6.3	Adsorption behaviour in quaternary solutions	5-38
5.2.6.4	Antagonism of multi-metals system	5-40
5.3	Conclusions	5-45
Chapter 6		6-1
Banana peels – a novel bio-waste for removal of Cu(II), Pb(II), Cd(II) and Zn(II) from aqueous solution		6-1
6.1	Background	6-2
6.2	Results and discussion	6-2
6.2.1	Environment friendly preparation	6-2
6.2.2	Characterisation of BP	6-3
6.2.2.1	Surface morphology of BP	6-3
6.2.2.2	Functional groups on the surfaces of BP	6-4
6.2.2.3	Specific surface area of BP	6-4
6.2.3	Affecting factors on the performance of biosorption	6-5
6.2.3.1	pH of water	6-5
6.2.3.2	Particle sizes	6-6
6.2.3.3	Doses	6-7
6.2.3.4	Contact Time	6-8
6.2.3.5	Shaking speed	6-9
6.2.3.6	Thermodynamic Parameters	6-10
6.2.4	Regeneration of banana peels	6-12
6.2.5	Modelling of adsorption and desorption isotherms	6-14
6.2.5.1	Langmuir isotherm	6-15
6.2.5.2	SIPS isotherm	6-18
6.2.5.3	Redlich-Peterson isotherm	6-20
6.2.5.4	Radke-Prausnitz model	6-23
6.2.5.5	The Brouers-Sotolongo isotherm	6-24
6.2.5.6	Model results comparison	6-25
6.2.6	Biosorption and desorption kinetics	6-26

6.2.6.1	Pseudo-first order model	6-26
6.2.6.2	Pseudo-second order model	6-30
6.2.6.3	Avrami kinetic equation	6-33
6.2.6.4	Intra-particle diffusion model	6-35
6.2.7	Multimetals adsorption	6-36
6.2.7.1	Antagonism among metals ions	6-38
6.3	Conclusion	6-41
Chapter 7		7-1
Maple leaves: a bio-waste for removal of Cu(II), Pb(II), Cd(II) and Zn(II) from aqueous solution		7-1
7.1	Background	7-2
7.2	Results and Discussion	7-3
7.2.1	Characterisation of biosorbent	7-3
7.2.1.1	Surface area of ML	7-3
7.2.1.2	Surface morphology	7-4
7.2.1.3	X-ray mapping	7-5
7.2.1.3	Functional groups	7-6
7.2.2	Affecting factors on the performance of biosorption	7-7
7.2.1.1	Influence of pH	7-7
7.2.1.2	Influence of biosorbent amount and initial metals concentrations	7-8
7.2.1.3	Influence of contact time and initial concentration	7-9
7.2.1.4	Influence of particle sizes	7-10
7.2.1.5	Biosorption thermodynamics	7-12
7.2.2	Regeneration of maple leaves	7-14
7.2.3	Biosorption and desorption kinetics	7-15
7.2.3.1	Pb(II) biosorption and desorption kinetics	7-16
7.2.3.2	Cd(II) biosorption and desorption kinetics	7-19
7.2.3.3	Cu(II) biosorption and desorption kinetics	7-21
7.2.3.4	Zn(II) biosorption and desorption kinetics	7-23
7.2.3.5	Intra-particle diffusion model	7-26
7.2.4	Biosorption and desorption equilibrium	7-27
7.2.4.1	Isotherm models	7-28
7.2.4.2	Equilibrium of Pb(II) adsorption and desorption	7-30
7.2.4.3	Equilibrium of Cd(II) adsorption and desorption	7-32
7.2.4.4	Equilibrium of Cu(II) adsorption and desorption	7-35
7.2.4.5	Equilibrium of Zn(II) adsorption and desorption	7-37

7.2.4.6	Comparison of fitness for Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II)	7-40
7.2.4.7	Adsorption mechanism	7-40
7.2.5	Multimetals adsorption	7-40
7.2.5.1	Adsorption behaviour in binary solutions	7-41
7.2.5.2	Adsorption behaviour in ternary solutions	7-43
7.2.5.3	Adsorption behaviour in quaternary solutions	7-45
7.2.5.4	Antagonism of multi-metals system	7-47
7.3	Conclusions	7-53
Chapter 8		8-1
Palm oil fruit shells as biosorbent for copper removal from aqueous solution		8-1
8.1	Background	8-2
8.2	Results and discussion	8-2
8.2.1	Characterization of palm oil fruit shells	8-2
8.2.1.1	Surface morphology	8-2
8.2.1.2	Surface area of POFS	8-3
8.2.1.3	Functional groups	8-4
8.2.2	Effect of pH	8-5
8.2.3	Equilibrium sorption modelling	8-6
8.2.3.1	Two-parameter models	8-7
8.2.3.2	Three-parameter models	8-10
8.2.4	Sorption kinetics	8-13
8.2.4.1	Pseudo-second-order kinetics	8-13
8.2.4.2	Elovich equation	8-14
8.2.4.3	Avrami kinetic equation	8-15
8.3	Conclusion	8-16
Chapter 9		9-1
Laboratory-scale fixed bed column experiments for evaluation the applicability of cabbage biosorbent to remove Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II) from aqueous solution		9-1
9.1	Background	9-2
9.2	Results and discussions	9-2
9.2.1	Effect of flow rate	9-2
9.2.2	Effect of bed depth	9-4
9.2.3	Effect of initial metals concentrations	9-5
9.2.4	Metals ions uptake at different column operation parameters	9-6

9.2.5	Influence of functional parameters on breakthrough curves	9-8
9.2.6	Evaluation of column data by dynamic models	9-8
9.2.6.1	Bed Depth Service Time (BDST) model	9-9
9.2.6.2	The Thomas, Yoon-Nelson and Clark models	9-11
9.2.7	Fixed bed column design	9-14
9.3	Conclusions	9-16
Chapter 10		10-1
Conclusions and Recommendations		10-1
10.1	Conclusions	10-2
10.1.1	Characteristics	10-2
10.1.2	Experimental conditions	10-2
10.1.3	Regeneration and reuse	10-2
10.1.4	Equilibrium biosorption	10-2
10.1.5	Kinetics of biosorption	10-3
10.1.6	Laboratory scale test with fixed-bed column	10-4
10.2	Recommendations	10-4
Reference		R-1
Appendices		A-1

List of Tables

Table 2.1	The MCL standards for the most hazardous heavy metals	2–15
Table 2.2	Heavy metal contents of representative gold mine tailings in Australia	2–18
Table 2.3	Australian heavy metals found in different water bodies	2–19
Table 2.4	Comparison of the effectiveness of removal of heavy metals using various techniques	2–21
Table 2.5	Pb(II) adsorption capacities (mg/g) by biosorbents recently reported in literature	2–61
Table 2.6	Cu(II) adsorption capacities (mg/g) by biosorbents recently reported in literature	2–61
Table 2.7	Cd(II) adsorption capacities (mg/g) by biosorbents recently reported in literature	2–62
Table 2.8	Zn(II) adsorption capacities (mg/g) by biosorbents recently reported in literature	2–62
Table 4.1	Surface parameters of garden grass from BET test	4-7
Table 4.2	Calculated parameters depends on the particle sizes of garden grass	4-11
Table 4.3	Thermodynamic parameters for the adsorption of metals by garden grass	4-13
Table 4.4	Isotherm parameters for adsorption and desorption of Cu(II) onto GG	4-18
Table 4.5	Isotherm parameters for adsorption and desorption of Pb(II) onto GG	4-20
Table 4.6	Isotherm parameters for adsorption and desorption of Cd(II) onto GG	4-21
Table 4.7	Isotherm parameters for adsorption and desorption of Zn(II) onto GG	4-23
Table 4.8	Kinetics parameters of Cu(II) adsorption and desorption onto garden grass	4-30
Table 4.9	Kinetics parameters of Zn(II) adsorption and desorption onto garden grass	4-33
Table 4.10	Kinetics parameters of Pb(II) adsorption and desorption onto garden grass	4-34
Table 4.11	Kinetics parameters of Cd(II) adsorption and desorption onto garden grass	4-36
Table 4.12	Isotherm parameters from quaternary metals [Cd(II)-Cu(II)-Zn(II)-Pb(II)] adsorption	4-39

Table 5.1	Surface parameters of cabbage wastes from BET test	5-5
Table 5.2	Parameters of pseudo-first-order kinetics for Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II) adsorption onto and desorption from cabbage waste	5-12
Table 5.3	Parameters of pseudo-second-order kinetics for Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II) adsorption onto and desorption from cabbage waste	5-16
Table 5.4	Parameters of Elovich model for Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II) adsorption onto and desorption from cabbage waste	5-18
Table 5.5	Parameters of Avrami model for Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II) adsorption onto and desorption from cabbage waste	5-20
Table 5.6	The predicted and experimental parameters of Langmuir isotherm model for adsorption and desorption of Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II) onto CW	5-24
Table 5.7	The predicted and experimental parameters of Freundlich isotherm model for adsorption and desorption of Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II) onto CW	5-27
Table 5.8	The predicted and experimental parameters of SIPS isotherm model for adsorption and desorption of Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II) onto CW	5-29
Table 5.9	The predicted and experimental parameters of Redlich-Peterson isotherm model for adsorption and desorption of Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II) onto CW	5-30
Table 5.10	The predicted and experimental parameters of Koble-Corrigan isotherm model for adsorption and desorption of Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II) onto CW	5-32
Table 5.11	The predicted and experimental parameters of Khan isotherm model for adsorption and desorption of Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II) onto CW	5-33
Table 5.12	Calculated parameters from Langmuir model for binary adsorption of Pb(II)-Cd(II), Cu(II)-Pb(II), Cd(II)-Zn(II), Cd(II)-Cu(II), Cu(II)-Zn(II) and Pb(II)-Zn(II) ions on CW	5-36
Table 5.13	Ternary adsorption parameters calculated from Langmuir model for Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II) adsorption	5-38
Table 5.14	Isotherm parameters of Langmuir model of quaternary metals [Cd(II)-Cu(II)-Zn(II)-Pb(II)] adsorption	5-39
Table 6.1	Surface parameters of banana peels from BET test	6-5
Table 6.2	Calculated value of thermodynamic parameters for the equilibrium adsorption of Cu(II), Pb(II), Cd(II) and Zn(II) onto banana peels	6-12

Table 6.3	Parameters of isotherm models for adsorption and desorption of Cu(II) onto and from banana peels	6-16
Table 6.4	Parameters of isotherm models for adsorption and desorption of Cd(II) onto and from banana peels	6-19
Table 6.5	Parameters of isotherm models for adsorption and desorption of Pb(II) onto and from banana peels	6-22
Table 6.6	Parameters of isotherm models for adsorption and desorption of Zn(II) onto and from banana peels	6-23
Table 6.7	Kinetics parameters of Cu(II) adsorption and desorption onto banana peels	6-27
Table 6.8	Kinetics parameters of Cd(II) adsorption and desorption onto banana peels	6-28
Table 6.9	Kinetics parameters of Pb(II) adsorption and desorption onto banana peels	6-30
Table 6.10	Kinetics parameters of Zn(II) adsorption and desorption onto banana peels	6-35
Table 6.11	Isotherm parameters from quaternary metals [Cd(II)-Cu(II)-Zn(II)-Pb(II)] adsorption	6-37
Table 7.1	BET characteristics of biosorbent produced from maple leaves	7-3
Table 7.2	Effects of particle sizes of ML for Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II) adsorption	7-11
Table 7.3	Thermodynamic parameters for the adsorption of Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II) ions by ML	7-13
Table 7.4	Kinetics parameters of Pb(II) adsorption and desorption onto ML	7-18
Table 7.5	Kinetics parameters of Cd(II) adsorption and desorption onto ML	7-21
Table 7.6	Kinetics parameters of Cu(II) adsorption and desorption onto ML	7-23
Table 7.7	Kinetics parameters of Zn(II) adsorption and desorption onto ML	7-25
Table 7.8	The prediction of isotherm models for adsorption and desorption of Pb(II) on maple leaves	7-31
Table 7.9	The prediction of isotherm models for adsorption and desorption of Cd(II) on maple leaves	7-33
Table 7.10	The prediction of isotherm models for adsorption and desorption of Cu(II) on maple leaves	7-35
Table 7.11	The prediction of isotherm models for adsorption and desorption of Zn(II) on maple leaves	7-39

Table 7.12	Calculated parameters from Langmuir model for binary adsorption of Pb(II)-Cd(II), Cu(II)-Pb(II), Cd(II)-Zn(II), Cd(II)-Cu(II), Cu(II)-Zn(II) and Pb(II)-Zn(II) ions on ML	7-42
Table 7.13	Ternary adsorption parameters calculated from Langmuir model for Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II) adsorption	7-45
Table 7.14	Isotherm parameters of Langmuir model for quaternary metals [Cd(II)-Cu(II)-Zn(II)-Pb(II)] adsorption	7-46
Table 8.1	BET characteristics of biosorbent produced from Palm Oil Fruit Shells	8-5
Table 8.2	Isotherm parameter of two-parameter models for copper sorption onto POFS	8-9
Table 8.3	Isotherm parameter of three-parameter models for Cu(II) sorption onto Palm Oil Fruit Shell	8-12
Table 8.4	Kinetics model's parameters of Cu(II) sorption onto POFS	8-15
Table 9.1	Uptake of Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II) at different operating conditions (particle size > 0.3 mm, bed depth = 2.25 cm, inlet pH= 6-6.5)	9-7
Table 9.2	BDST model parameters for the sorption of Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II) onto cabbage waste at varying bed heights (flow rate = 34.5 ml/min, initial metals concentration = 10 mg/l, particle size > 0.3 mm, temperature = room temp., inlet pH = 6-6.5)	9-10
Table 9.3	The Thomas, Yoon-Nelson and Clark models parameters for Pb(II) biosorption onto cabbage waste at different bed heights, flow rate and inlet concentration (particle size >0.3mm, temperature = room temp., inlet pH: 6-6.5)	9-12
Table 9.4	The Thomas, Yoon-Nelson and Clark models parameters for Cd(II) biosorption onto cabbage waste at different bed heights, flow rate and inlet concentration (particle size >0.3mm, temperature = room temp., inlet pH: 6-6.5)	9-13
Table 9.5	The Thomas, Yoon-Nelson and Clark models parameters for Cu(II) biosorption onto cabbage waste at different bed heights, flow rate and inlet concentration (particle size >0.3mm, temperature = room temp., inlet pH: 6-6.5)	9-13
Table 9.6	The Thomas, Yoon-Nelson and Clark models parameters for Zn(II) biosorption onto cabbage waste at different bed heights, flow rate and inlet concentration (particle size >0.3mm, temperature = room temp., inlet pH: 6-6.5)	9-14

Lists of Figures

Figure 2.1	Heavy metals pollution: A prize tag of modern society	2-4
Figure 2.2	Global scenario of heavy metal pollution from the ancient time (adapted from Nriagu, 1996)	2-16
Figure 2.3	A schematic showing a typical solvent extraction process for copper	2-31
Figure 2.4	Plausible mechanism of biosorption (adapted from Sud et al., 2008)	2-52
Figure 2.5	A schematic diagram of adsorption zone in different zone and resulting break through curve (adapted from Tor et al., 2009)	2-76
Figure 3.1	A typical scanning electron microscope (Gemini, JSM-35CF, UK)	3-5
Figure 3.2	Adsorption isotherm plot for BET surface area calculation	3-9
Figure 3.3	Flow diagram of experimental setup for optimisation of pH	3-11
Figure 3.4	A typical platform shaker where all the batch experiments are conducted	3-14
Figure 3.5	A typical flocculator where all kinetics adsorption and desorption experiments conducted	3-15
Figure 3.6	The schematic diagram of the constructed column with all components	3-17
Figure 3.7	An Atomic Adsorption Spectroscopy (AAS) (Contra®AA 300, Analytikjena, Germany)	3-18
Figure 4.1	SEM micrograph of garden grass with different magnifications (A. 1KX, B. 2 KX, C. 4 KX and D. 10 KX)	4-3
Figure 4.2	X-ray mapping of (a) Garden grass (b) Garden grass exhausted with copper (c) Colour mapping of garden grass (d) Colour mapping of garden grass exhausted with copper (e) Spectra of garden grass (f) Spectra of garden grass exhausted with copper	4-4
Figure 4.3	X-ray mapping micrograph of GG exhausted with metals (a. Exhausted with Pb(II), b. Exhausted with Cd(II) and c. Exhausted with Zn(II))	4-5
Figure 4.4	The FTIR spectra with predicted peaks for functional groups of garden grass	4-6
Figure 4.5	Effect of pH on Cd(II), Cu(II), Zn(II) and Pb(II) adsorptions (Co = 10 mg/l; dose = 0.5g/100ml)	4-8
Figure 4.6	Effects of contact time and initial metals concentration on removals of Cu(II), Pb(II), Cd(II) and Zn(II) from water by garden grass	4-9
Figure 4.7	Effects of doses of biosorbents on removals of Cu(II), Pb(II), Cd(II) and Zn(II) from water	4-10
Figure 4.8	Effects of particle sizes of biosorbents on removals of Cu(II), Pb(II), Cd(II) and Zn(II) from water	4-11

Figure 4.9	Effect of shaking speed on removal of Cu(II), Pb(II), Cd(II) and Zn(II) (Co: 10 mg/l; d: 0.5 g; t: 3 h; pH: 6-6.5; rpm: 120; T: 20°C)	4-14
Figure 4.10	Regeneration of garden grass after adsorption of Cu(II), Pb(II), Cd(II) and Zn(II) ions (Vo: 100; d: 0.5 g; t: 3 h; rpm: 120; T: 20°C)	4-15
Figure 4.11	Adsorption and desorption cycle for Cu(II), Pb(II), Cd(II) and Zn(II) onto garden grass (Vo: 100 l; d: 0.5 g; t: 3 h; rpm: 120; T: 20°C)	4-15
Figure 4.12	Isotherm modelling of adsorption and desorption of Cu(II) onto garden grass with different doses (Co: 1-500 mg/l; d: 0.05-1 g; t: 3 h; pH: 6-6.5; rpm: 120; T: 20°C)	4-17
Figure 4.13	Isotherm modelling of adsorption and desorption of Pb(II) onto garden grass with different doses (Co: 1-500 mg/l; d: 0.05-1 g; t: 3 h; pH: 6-6.5; rpm: 120; T: 20°C)	4-19
Figure 4.14	Isotherm modelling of adsorption and desorption of Cd(II) onto garden grass with different doses (Co: 1-500 mg/l; d: 0.05-1 g; t: 3 h; pH: 6-6.5; rpm: 120; T: 20°C)	4-21
Figure 4.15	Isotherm modelling of adsorption and desorption of Zn(II) onto garden grass with different doses (Co: 1-500 mg/l; d: 0.05-1 g; t: 3 h; pH: 6-6.5; rpm: 120; T: 20°C)	4-23
Figure 4.16	Plots of percent deviation of adsorption capacity of Cu(II), Pb(II), Cd(II) and Zn(II) onto 10 g garden grass	4-28
Figure 4.17	Kinetics modelling of Cu(II) adsorption and desorption onto GG	4-31
Figure 4.18	Kinetics modelling of Zn(II) adsorption and desorption onto GG	4-32
Figure 4.19	Kinetics modelling of Pb(II) adsorption and desorption onto GG	4-34
Figure 4.20	Kinetics modelling of Cd(II) adsorption and desorption onto GG	4-35
Figure 4.21	Plots for intra-particle diffusion kinetic model of garden grass for adsorption and desorption of Cu(II) (Co: 10, 50, 100 mg/l; d: 0.5 g; t: 24h; pH: 6-6.5; rpm: 120; T: 20°C)	4-37
Figure 4.22	Plots for intra-particle diffusion kinetic model of garden grass for adsorption and desorption of Cd(II) (Co: 10, 50, 100 mg/l; d: 0.5 g; t: 24h; pH: 6-6.5 ; rpm: 120; T: 20°C)	4-37
Figure 4.23	Plots for intra-particle diffusion kinetic model of garden grass for adsorption and desorption of Pb(II) (Co: 10, 50, 100 mg/l; d: 0.5 g; t: 24h; pH: 6-6.5; rpm: 120; T: 20°C)	4-38
Figure 4.24	Plots for intra-particle diffusion kinetic model of garden grass for adsorption and desorption of Zn(II) (Co: 10, 50, 100 mg/l; d: 0.5 g; t: 24h; pH: 6-6.5; rpm: 120; T: 20°C)	4-38
Figure 4.25	Quaternary adsorption among the Cu(II), Pb(II), Cd(II) and Zn(II) in the four metals system of Cd(II)-Pb(II)-Cu(II)-Zn(II)	4-40

Figure 4.26	Experimental and model predicted surface areas in terms of adsorption capacity of metals in surface diagram for quaternary metals adsorption onto GG	4-41
Figure 4.27	Engaged area in terms of capacity of metals in radar diagram for quaternary metals adsorption onto GG	4-42
Figure 5.1	Micro-graphs of cabbage wastes taken by SEM	5-3
Figure 5.2	FTIR spectra of the biosorbent from cabbage wastes	5-4
Figure 5.3	Effect of pH on Cd(II), Cu(II), Zn(II) and Pb(II) adsorptions (Co = 10 mg/l; dose= 0.5g/100ml)	5-6
Figure 5.4	Effects of contact times on the removals of Pb (II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II) from water by CW	5-7
Figure 5.5	Effects of different doses on the removals of Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II) from water by cabbage waste biosorbents	5-8
Figure 5.6	Effect of initial concentrations of Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II) on the percent removal by CW	5-8
Figure 5.7	Regeneration of cabbage waste by different eluent from Pb(II), Cu(II), Cd(II) and Zn(II) adsorption (Vo: 100; d: 0.5 g; t: 3 h; rpm: 120; T: 20°C)	5-10
Figure 5.8	Regeneration cycles of cabbage waste from Pb(II), Cu(II), Cd(II) and Zn(II) adsorption and desorption by 0.1N H ₂ SO ₄ . (Vo: 100; d: 0.5 g; t: 3 h; rpm: 120; T: 20°C)	5-10
Figure 5.9	Kinetics modelling of adsorption and desorption of Pb(II) onto cabbage waste (Co: 50 mg/l; d: 0.5 g; t: 3 h; pH: 6-6.5; rpm: 120; T: room temp.)	5-14
Figure 5.10	Kinetics modelling of adsorption and desorption of Cd(II) onto cabbage waste (Co: 50 mg/l; d: 0.5 g; t: 3 h; pH: 6-6.5; rpm: 120; T: room temp.)	5-17
Figure 5.11	Kinetics modelling of adsorption and desorption of Cu(II) onto cabbage waste (Co: 50 mg/l; d: 0.5 g; t: 3 h; pH: 6-6.5; rpm: 120; T: room temp.)	5-19
Figure 5.12	Kinetics modelling of adsorption and desorption of Zn(II) onto cabbage waste (Co: 50 mg/l; d: 0.5 g; t: 3 h; pH: 6-6.5; rpm: 120; T: room temp.)	5-21
Figure 5.13	Isotherm modelling of adsorption and desorption of Pb(II) onto cabbage waste with different doses (Co: 1-500 mg/l; d: 0.05-1 g; t: 3 h; pH: 6-6.5; rpm: 120; T: 20°C)	5-23
Figure 5.14	Isotherm modelling of adsorption and desorption of Cd(II) onto cabbage waste with different doses (Co: 1-500 mg/l; d: 0.05-1 g; t: 3 h; pH: 6-6.5; rpm: 120; T: 20°C)	5-26
Figure 5.15	Isotherm modelling of adsorption and desorption of Cu(II) onto cabbage waste with different doses (Co: 1-500 mg/l; d: 0.05-1 g; t: 3 h; pH: 6-6.5; rpm: 120; T: 20°C)	5-28

Figure 5.16	Isotherm modelling of adsorption and desorption of Zn(II) onto cabbage waste with different doses (Co: 1-500 mg/l; d: 0.05-1 g; t: 3 h; pH: 6-6.5; rpm: 120; T: 20°C)	5-31
Figure 5.17	Equilibrium of binary adsorption of Pb(II)-Cd(II), Cu(II)-Pb(II), Cd(II)-Zn(II), Cd(II)-Cu(II), Cu(II)-Zn(II) and Pb(II)-Zn(II) ions on CW	5-35
Figure 5.18	Ternary adsorption of among the Cu(II), Pb(II), Cd(II) and Zn(II) in the ternary systems of Cd(II)-Pb(II)-Cu(II), Cd(II)-Pb(II)-Zn(II), Cu(II)-Cd(II)-Zn(II) and Cu(II)-Pb(II)-Zn(II)	5-37
Figure 5.19	Quaternary adsorption of among the Cu(II), Pb(II), Cd(II) and Zn(II) in the four metals system of Cd(II)-Pb(II)-Cu(II)-Zn(II)	5-39
Figure 5.20	Antagonism among the metals for Cu(II)-Zn(II) (A&B) and Pb(II)-Cd(II) (C&D) binary system	5-41
Figure 5.21	Antagonism among the metals for Cd(II)-Zn(II) (A&B), Cu(II)-Cd(II) (C&D) and Pb(II)-Cu(II) (E&F) binary system	5-42
Figure 5.22	Occupied physical surface area of metals in terms of capacity for ternary metals adsorption system onto cabbage waste	5-43
Figure 5.23	Engaged area in terms of capacity of metals in radar diagram for quaternary metals adsorption onto cabbage waste	5-44
Figure 6.1	BSE (backscattered electron) images of banana peels taken by SEM	6-3
Figure 6.2	Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy (FTIR) spectra of BP	6-4
Figure 6.3	Effect of pH on the removal of Cu(II), Pb(II), Cd(II) and Zn(II) by BP	6-6
Figure 6.4	Effect of particle sizes of BP on the removal of Cu(II), Pb(II), Cd(II) and Zn(II)	6-7
Figure 6.5	Effect on the removal of Cu(II), Pb(II), Cd(II) and Zn(II) for the doses of banana peels	6-8
Figure 6.6	Effect on the removal of Cu(II), Pb(II), Cd(II) and Zn(II) for the doses of banana peels	6-9
Figure 6.7	Effect of shaking speed on removal of Cu(II), Pb(II), Cd(II) and Zn(II) (t: 24h; Co: 10 mg/l; d: 5 g/l; T: 20°C; pH: 6-6.5)	6-10
Figure 6.8	Plots of Gibbs free energy (ΔG°) versus Temperature ($^\circ\text{T}$) for Cu(II), Cd(II), Pb(II) and Zn(II) adsorption onto BP	6-11
Figure 6.9	Regeneration of banana peels from Cu(II), Pb(II), Cd(II) and Zn(II) from adsorption	6-13
Figure 6.10	Regeneration cycles of banana peels from Cu(II), Pb(II), Cd(II) and Zn(II) from adsorption	6-13
Figure 6.11	Isotherm modelling of adsorption and desorption of Cu(II) onto and from banana peels (Co: 1-500 mg/l; d: 0.05-1 g; t: 3h; pH: 6-6.5; rpm: 120; T: 20°C)	6-17
Figure 6.12	Isotherm modelling of adsorption and desorption of Cd(II) onto and from banana peels (Co: 1-500 mg/l; d: 0.05-1 g; t: 3h; pH: 6-6.5; rpm: 120; T: 20°C)	6-20

Figure 6.13	Isotherm modelling of adsorption and desorption of Pb(II) onto and from banana peels (Co: 1-500 mg/l; d: 0.05-1 g; t: 3h; pH: 6-6.5; rpm: 120; T: 20°C)	6-21
Figure 6.14	Isotherm modelling of adsorption and desorption of Zn(II) onto and from banana peels (Co: 1-500 mg/l; d: 0.05-1 g; t: 3h; pH: 6-6.5; rpm: 120; T: 20°C)	6-24
Figure 6.15	Kinetics modelling of adsorption and desorption of Cu(II) onto banana peels (Co: 50 mg/l; d: 0.5 g; t: 3 h; pH: 6-6.5; rpm: 120; T: room temp.)	6-29
Figure 6.16	Kinetics modelling of adsorption and desorption of Cd(II) onto banana peels (Co: 50 mg/l; d: 0.5 g; t: 3 h; pH: 6-6.5; rpm: 120; T: room temp.)	6-31
Figure 6.17	Kinetics modelling of adsorption and desorption of Pb(II) onto banana peels (Co: 50 mg/l; d: 0.5 g; t: 3 h; pH: 6-6.5; rpm: 120; T: room temp.)	6-33
Figure 6.18	Kinetics modelling of adsorption and desorption of Zn(II) onto banana peels (Co: 50 mg/l; d: 0.5 g; t: 3 h; pH: 6-6.5; rpm: 120; T: room temp.)	6-34
Figure 6.19	Quaternary adsorption of among the Cu(II), Pb(II), Cd(II) and Zn(II) in the four metals system of Cd(II)-Pb(II)-Cu(II)-Zn(II)	6-38
Figure 6.20	Experimental and model predicted surface areas in terms of adsorption capacity of metals in surface diagram for quaternary metals adsorption onto BP	6-39
Figure 6.21	Engaged area in terms of capacity of metals in radar diagram for quaternary metals adsorption onto BP	6-40
Figure 7.1	SEM micrograph of ML with different magnifications (A. 3KX, B. 14 KX, C. 19.5 KX and D. 105 KX).	7-4
Figure 7.2	SEM micrograph 150x (HWOFF=600µm) (a) Maple leaves (b) Maple leaves exhausted with lead (c) X-ray mapping of maple leaves exhausted with lead (d) Spectra of maple leaves (e) Spectra of maple leaves exhausted with metals	7-5
Figure 7.3	The Fourier transforms infrared spectroscopy (FTIR) spectra of maple leaves powder (ML)	7-6
Figure 7.4	Effect of pH on the removal of Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II)	7-7
Figure 7.5	Effect of ML doses on the removal of Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II)	7-8
Figure 7.6	Effect of contact time and initial Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II) concentrations	7-9
Figure 7.7	Effect of particle sizes of ML on removal of Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II) ions.	7-11
Figure 7.8	Plots of Gibbs free energy (ΔG°) versus Temperature ($^\circ T$) for Cu(II), Cd(II), Pb(II) and Zn(II) adsorption onto ML	7-12
Figure 7.9	Regeneration of ML from Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II) from adsorption	7-14
Figure 7.10	Regeneration cycles of ML from Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II), and Zn(II) from adsorption	7-15

Figure 7.11	Kinetics modelling of adsorption and desorption of Pb(II) onto maple leaves (Co: 10, 50, 100 mg/l; d: 0.5 g; t: 3 h: pH: 6-6.5; rpm: 120; T: 20°C)	7-17
Figure 7.12	Kinetics modelling of adsorption and desorption of Cd(II) onto maple leaves (Co: 10, 50, 100 mg/l; d: 0.5 g; t: 2h: pH: 6-6.5; rpm: 120; T: 20°C)	7-19
Figure 7.13	Kinetics modelling of adsorption and desorption of Cu(II) onto maple leaves (Co: 10, 50, 100 mg/l; d: 0.5 g; t: 2h: pH: 6-6.5; rpm: 120; T: 20°C)	7-22
Figure 7.14	Kinetics modelling of adsorption and desorption of Zn(II) onto maple leaves (Co: 10, 50, 100 mg/l; d: 0.5 g; t: 2h: pH: 6-6.5; rpm: 120; T: 20°C)	7-24
Figure 7.15	Plots for intra-particle diffusion kinetic model ML for adsorption Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II) (Co: 10, 50, 100 mg/l; d: 0.5 g; t: 2h: pH: 6-6.5; rpm: 120; T: 20°C)	7-27
Figure 7.16	Isotherm modelling of adsorption and desorption of Pb(II) onto ML with different doses (Co: 1-500 mg/l; d: 0.05-1 g; t: 3 h: pH: 6-6.5; rpm: 120; T: 20°C)	7-30
Figure 7.17	Isotherm modelling of adsorption and desorption of Cd(II) onto ML with different doses (Co: 1-500 mg/l; d: 0.05-1 g; t: 3 h: pH: 6-6.5; rpm: 120; T: 20°C)	7-34
Figure 7.18	Isotherm modelling of adsorption and desorption of Cu(II) onto ML with different doses (Co: 1-500 mg/l; d: 0.05-1 g; t: 3 h: pH: 6-6.5; rpm: 120; T: 20°C)	7-36
Figure 7.19	Isotherm modelling of adsorption and desorption of Zn(II) onto ML with different doses (Co: 1-500 mg/l; d: 0.05-1 g; t: 3 h: pH: 6-6.5; rpm: 120; T: 20°C)	7-38
Figure 7.20	Equilibrium of binary adsorption of Pb(II)-Cd(II), Cu(II)-Pb(II), Cd(II)-Zn(II), Cd(II)-Cu(II), Cu(II)-Zn(II) and Pb(II)-Zn(II) ions on ML	7-41
Figure 7.21	Ternary adsorption of among the Cu(II), Pb(II), Cd(II) and Zn(II) in the ternary systems of Cd(II)-Pb(II)-Cu(II), Cd(II)-Pb(II)-Zn(II), Cu(II)-Cd(II)-Zn(II) and Cu(II)-Pb(II)-Zn(II)	7-44
Figure 7.22	Quaternary adsorption of among the Cu(II), Pb(II), Cd(II) and Zn(II) in the four metals system of Cd(II)-Pb(II)-Cu(II)-Zn(II)	7-46
Figure 7.23	Experimental and model predicted surface areas in terms of adsorption capacity of metals in surface diagram for quaternary metals adsorption onto ML	7-47
Figure 7.24	Antagonism among the metals for Pb(II)-Cd(II) (A & B), Cd(II)-Cu(II) (C & D) and Cu(II)-Pb(II) (E & F) binary system	7-48
Figure 7.25	Antagonism among the metals for Cu(II)-Zn(II) (A&B), Cd(II)-Zn(II) (C&D) and Zn(II)-Pb(II) (E&F) binary system	7-49
Figure 7.26	Occupied physical surface area of metals in terms of capacity for ternary metals adsorption system onto ML	7-50

Figure 7.27	Engaged area in terms of capacity of metals in spider diagram for quaternary metals adsorption onto ML	7-52
Figure 8.1	SEM micrograph of pofs with different magnifications (A. 1X, B. 5KX, C. 50X AND D. 90KX)	8-4
Figure 8.2	FTIR spectra of palm oil fruit shells (POFS)	8-6
Figure 8.3	Effect of ph on removal of Cu(II) by POFS	8-7
Figure 8.4	Isotherm modelling of Cu(II) sorption onto palm oil fruit shells for two-parameter models	8-10
Figure 8.5	Isotherm modelling of Cu(II) sorption onto POFS for three-parameter models	8-11
Figure 8.6	Kinetics modelling of Cu(II) sorption on palm oil fruit shells	8-16
Figure 9.1	Breakthrough curves for Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II) biosorption onto cabbage waste at different flow rates (bed depth = 2.25 cm, inlet Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II) concentrations = 5 mg/l, particle size > 0.3 mm, temperature = room temp. and influent pH 6.0-6.5)	9-3
Figure 9.2	Breakthrough curves for Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II) biosorption onto cabbage waste at different bed heights (inlet Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II) concentrations = 9 mg/l, flow rate = 7.07 l/h, particle size > 0.3 mm, temperature = room temp and influent pH 6.0-6.5)	9-4
Figure 9.3	Breakthrough curves for Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II) biosorption onto cabbage waste at different initial Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II) concentrations (flow rate = 2.07 l/h, bed depth = 2.25 cm, particle size > 0.3 mm, temperature = room temp, influent pH 6.0-6.5)	9-5
Figure 9.4	BDST model plots for Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II) biosorption onto cabbage waste at different bed heights (flow rate = 2.07 l/h, initial metals concentration = 10 mg/l, particle size > 0.3, temperature = room temp, inlet pH= 6-6.5)	9-9

Acronyms and symbols

GG	: Garden grass
CW	: Cabbage waste
BP	: Banana peel
ML	: Maple leaves
POFS	: Palm oil fruit shells
FTIR	: Fourier-transform infrared spectroscopy
XRD	: X-ray diffraction
SEM	: Scanning electron microscopy
AAS	: Atomic absorption spectroscopy
BDST	: Bed Depth Service Time
TEMP	: Temperature
TIME	: Contact time
BET	: Brunauer, Emmer and Teller model
US EPA	: United States Environmental Protection Agency
Cd	: Cadmium
Cu	: Copper
Pb	: Lead
Zn	: Zinc
min	: Minute
ml	: Millilitre (0.001 litre)
mm	: Millimetre (0.001 metre)
l	: Litre
MW	: Molecular weight
A	: Cross-section area of the media sample
C_0	: Initial metal concentration
C_e	: Final metal (or residual/equilibrium) concentration
m	: Dry weight of biomass (dose)
q_e	: Equilibrium uptake of metal
q_m	: Maximum metal uptake or maximum adsorption capacity
V	: Volume of liquid
K_L	: Langmuir constant (empirical constant)
K_F	: Freundlich capacity factor
n	: Freundlich intensity parameter (dimensionless)
K_{RP}	: Redlich-Peterson isotherm constant
α_{RP}	: Redlich-Peterson isotherm constant
β	: Redlich-Peterson isotherm exponent
A_{KC}	: Koble-Corrigan parameter

BKC	:	Koble-Corrigan parameter
p	:	Koble-Corrigan parameter
K_T	:	Temkin isotherm constant
A	:	specific surface area
B_1	:	Temkin constant in relation to heat of sorption
b_T	:	Toth parameter
β_R	:	Radke-Prausnitz isotherm exponent
α_R	:	Radke-Prausnitz model constants
r_R	:	Radke-Prausnitz model constants
b_K	:	Khan model constant
a_K	:	Khan model exponent
S	:	Temperature dependent Unilan model constants
d	:	Temperature dependent Unilan model constants
K_{FH}	:	Flory-Huggins model's equilibrium constant
n_{FH}	:	Flory-Huggins model's exponent
B_{DR}	:	Dubinin-Radushkevich constant related to sorption energy
ε	:	Dubinin-Radushkevich polanyi potential
K_s	:	Sips isotherm constants
α_s	:	Sips isotherm constants
β	:	Sips isotherm exponent
k_1	:	First-order rate constants
k_2	:	Second-order rate constants
k_p	:	Intraparticle diffusion rate constant
K_{AV}	:	Avrami kinetic constant
n_{AV}	:	Fractionary constant for Avrami kinetic
C_s	:	The concentration at the solid/liquid interface
D	:	The axial diffusion coefficient
β_a	:	The kinetic coefficient of the external mass transfer
C_{break}	:	The outlet concentration at breakthrough
t_{break}	:	The time at breakthrough
τ	:	Time required for 50% adsorbate breakthrough
K_T	:	Thomas rate constant
θ	:	The volumetric flow rate
ΔG°	:	Gibbs free energy
ΔH°	:	Enthalpy change
ΔS°	:	Entropy change

List of Publications

Publications and presentations as the outcomes from this study:

1. Hossain, M.A., H.H. Ngo, W.S. Guo, T.V. Nguyen. “*Palm oil fruit shells as biosorbent for copper removal from water and wastewater: Experiments and sorption models*” Bioresource Technology 113 (2012) 97–101.
2. Hossain, M.A., H.H. Ngo, W.S. Guo, T. Setiadi. “*Adsorption and desorption of copper(II) ions onto garden grass*”. Bioresource Technology 121 (2012) 386–395.
3. Hossain, M. A., H. H. Ngo, W. S. Guo and T. V. Nguyen. “*Biosorption of Cu(II) From Water by Banana Peel Based Biosorbent: Experiments and Models of Adsorption and Desorption*” Journal of Water Sustainability, Volume 2, Issue 1, March 2012, 87–104.
4. Hossain, M. A., H. H. Ngo, W. S. Guo, T. V. Nguyen and S. Vigneswaran, “*Performance of cabbage and cauliflower wastes for heavy metals removal*”. Journal of Desalination and Water Treatment- Science and Engineering (2013) 1–17.
5. Hossain, M. A., H. Hao Ngo, W. S. Guo “*Introductory of Microsoft Excel SOLVER function-spreadsheet method for isotherm and kinetics modelling of metals biosorption in water and wastewater*” Journal of Water Sustainability Journal of Water Sustainability, Vol.3(4), 2013, 223–237.
6. Hossain, M. A., H. Hao Ngo, W. S. Guo, J. Zhang and S. Liang. “*A laboratory study using maple leaves as a biosorbent for lead removal from aqueous solutions*”. Water Quality Research Journal of Canada (Accepted and in press).
7. Hossain, M. A., H. H. Ngo, W. S. Guo, L. D. Nghiem, F. I. Hai, S. Vigneswaran, T. V. Nguyen, “*Competitive adsorption of metals on cabbage waste from multi-metal solutions*”, Bioresource Technology, (Accepted and in press).

Conference papers:

1. *Feasibility study of palm oil fruit shells as biosorbent for copper removal from water and wastewater*, International Conference on Challenges in Environmental Science & Engineering (4th CESE 2011, Tainan, Taiwan).
2. *Comparison study on the performance of cabbage and cauliflower for heavy metals removal*, International Conference on Challenges in Environmental Science & Engineering (5th CESE 2012, Melbourne, Australia).

Abstract

The contamination of water by toxic heavy metals including lead, cadmium, copper and zinc is a global problem. The release of these metals into the environment has become a serious health problem due to its toxicity. Progressively stricter discharge regulations on heavy metals have accelerated the search for highly efficient but economically feasible or alternative treatment methods for its removal. The use of low-cost and bio-waste or agro-waste as biosorbents for dissolved metal ions removals has shown potential to provide economic solutions to this environmental setback.

Garden grass (GG), cabbage waste (CW), banana peels (BP), maple leaves (ML) and palm oil fruit shells (POFS) have been identified as potentially low cost and efficient biosorbent for the removal of toxic heavy metals from aqueous solution. Very simple methods were used to prepare these biosorbents. The collected GG, CW, BP, ML and POFS were washed, cut into pieces, dried in oven at 105°C, grounded into powder and used for experiments.

The biosorbents were characterized by SEM, XRD, FTIR and BET tests. Surprisingly, all biosorbents showed that the surfaces of biosorbents' particles are porous, heterogeneous structures, with uneven, asymmetric steps and pores which contained high internal spaces and posed higher specific surface area. The BET surface areas are 21.28, 1.027, 22.59, 10.94 and 39.76 m²/g for GG, CW, BP, ML and POFS, respectively. These biosorbents possess many hydroxyl, carbonyl and phenyl functional groups (by FTIR test) and therefore, all these biosorbents are good contenders for water treatment and purification utilizations.

Biosorption of all four metals [Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II)] by GG, CW, BP, ML and POFS was found to be dependent on experimental conditions. The optimum biosorption were noted at pH 6-6.5, shaking speed of 120 rpm, initial concentration of 10 mg/l, dose of 5g/l, contact time of 2 h and particle sizes < 75µm. The increase of temperature negatively affected the metals biosorption and at room temperature the metals biosorption process is spontaneous and exothermic in nature. The acid medium (0.1N H₂SO₄) was found to be a better eluent for regeneration of exhausted biosorbents and it could be reused 5-7 times with minor deviation of efficiency except CW.

The efficient metal removing ability of biosorbents in both batch experiments and continuous flow fixed bed column bioreactors used to produce a biosorbent based metals removal system. It suggests that these novel biosorbents could lead to the development of a viable and cost-effective technology for metals removal from water and wastewaters. The prepared biosorbents were evaluated for the adsorption of Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II) ions from single and multimetals aqueous solution by the batch method. The biosorption data were evaluated by equilibrium isotherms models. GG isotherm data posed better fitness with Langmuir, Freundlich and SIPS models as the R^2 lies between 0.991 and 0.999. Three-parameter models (Redlich-Peterson, Koble-Corrigan and SIPS) and two-parameter models (Langmuir and Freundlich) showed good fitness (R^2 : 0.991-1.0) with equilibrium adsorption data from CW. The biosorption data from BP are evaluated by Langmuir, SIPS, Redlich-Peterson, Radke-Prausnitz, and Brouers-Sotolongo and results showed a good fitness as the R^2 were between 0.998 to 1. Among the models three-parameter models such as Sips, Redlich-Peterson and Unilan showed good fitness with isotherm data from ML as the R^2 are 0.988-1.00. Likewise the equilibrium data from POFS posed proper agreement with three parameter models for biosorption of Cu(II). Significantly low RMSE and χ^2 values are found from all the used models which also signify the models fitness.

The maximum Pb(II) adsorption capacities (q_m) are 54.205, 61.267, 120.096 and 50.267 mg/g for GG, CW, BP and ML respectively; whereas it were 41.66, 22.123, 50.459 and 39.599 mg/g for Cd(II) biosorption. Among the biosorbents GG, ML and POFS showed good biosorption capacities for Cu(II) ion and the values are 58.34, 34.534 and 59.502 mg/g. The Zn(II) adsorption capacities are moderate and the magnitude of capacities are 57.53, 12.236, 51.896 and 29.94 mg/g for GG, CW, BP and ML respectively. A strong antagonisms were found among the metals ions [Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II) ions] in the multimetals adsorption systems though Pb(II) and Cd(II) ions dominated. Surprisingly, the maximum reduction in capacities were also found for Pb(II) and Cd(II). The equilibrium and kinetics data for desorption were also evaluated the by isotherm models and kinetics models. Some data from GG and ML showed good agreement with models but most of the data did not pose appropriate fitness.

The kinetics of metal removal by all biosorbents was extremely fast, reaching equilibrium in about 15-60 minutes which is showed the practical potentiality. The both

pseudo-first-order and pseudo-second-order models was found to be the best fit (R^2 : 0.991-1.00) to describe the biosorption mechanism of Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II) ions onto the biosorbents. This implies that the adsorption mechanisms are both physisorption and chemisorption. As reaction constant, k_2 and n_{AV} (from order and Avrami equation) values were greater than 1 suggested that biosorption reaction is more than one order. Intraparticle diffusion also involved for biosorption process. Along with this, Elovich and Fraction power models also posed good fitness with kinetics data.

The metal removing capacity of CW was also tested in continuous flow fixed-bed column bioreactors for artificial wastewater. The removal capacities were 15.72, 62.23, 68.23 and 70.71 times higher than that obtained in a batch system for Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II) ions. The appropriate service times to breakthrough and metals ions concentration were 5-10 h and 10 mg/l, respectively. The design of a continuous fixed bed column treatment system with CW biosorbent for Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II) laden wastewater can be reached using the BDST, Yoon-Nelson and Clark breakthrough models.

Elucidate the biosorption mechanisms is one of the aims for biosorption of metals. Fitness of pseudo-first-order and pseudo-second-order models suggested the biosorption are both physisorption and chemisorption. FTIR tests showed the functional groups which responsible ions exchange. Isotherm data fitted more with three-parameter models which signifies the adsorption onto heterogeneous surface. It is also found from SEM and XRD data. Thus, it could not be ascertained from the results which single mechanism involved for metals biosorption. However, it could presume that combination of all mechanisms with complexation are responsible for Pb(II), Cd(II), Cu(II) and Zn(II) ions and therefore, high biosorption capacities were found.